

THE BRITISH COLONIST

Monday Morning, February 27, 1865.

To Advertisers & the Public.

THE BRITISH COLONIST, (Postage Prepaid), is the largest and most popular journal in Her Majesty's Possessions on the Pacific Coast.

Advertisers may have the same inserted at their residence at 25 cents, but we will furnish their address at the Office of Publishers.

THE WEEKLY BRITISH COLONIST, (Postage Prepaid), will be made ready for mailing, at 20 cents per week, payable to the carriers.

JOB PRINTING.

THE BRITISH COLONIST PUBLISHING COMPANY, in addition to their stock of new and beautiful Jobbing type, will execute orders to print, with the best materials, of a slight amount on San Francisco paper.

THE CARIBOO MINERS.

Above all classes of men in any country, the miners of Cariboo have shown least of that instinct which makes the tax pay an innocent grumbler. It is so, however, because they are any law taxed; for there is not, throughout the civilized globe, any class of consumers that have been obliged to contribute so largely to the Government of the country. Their provisions no sooner enter New Westminster than they pay an import duty; no sooner ascend the Fraser than they are met by tonnage dues; no sooner touch the roads, than another tax appears in the shape of tolls, and from this point until they are deposited in the store at Williams Creek, road tolls and bridge tolls keep the packer's hands in continuous motion to his besieged pocket. It is not, therefore, as we have said, because the miner is any less taxed that he has remained silent; but rather because until the last year or two he has had a temporary interest in the country. The time has come, however, when he begins to perceive the necessity of extending his range of thought beyond his claim. He has now become a more permanent fixture in the colony. During the years of 1858, 1859, 1860, and 1861, mining was at the best, but a fitful occupation, and the miner a kind of nomad, rambling over the country. Since then, however, more stability has been given to the vocation, and large sums have been invested in enterprises, from which a profitable result could not reasonably be anticipated for some years. When men begin to expend thousands of dollars in this manner—when they risk their capital in developing a country's resources, from that moment their interest in the Government commences to increase, and fiscal operations become to them matters of profound concern. It is not surprising, therefore, that the miners of Cariboo should take the present opportunity, when increased duties are being imposed upon them, to protest against the heavy load of taxes they are obliged to bear.

The meeting on Saturday, although held in Victoria, for the very valid reason that a better opportunity presented itself here than even on the miners of getting together a large body of Cariboo miners and traders, was essentially a Cariboo meeting from beginning to end. The speakers were men largely interested in the mines of the neighboring colony, and the persons who carried the resolutions by acclamation, were the hardy drivers of the aridiferous soil. So far as the action of the meeting was concerned, it was almost perfectly unanimous, and orderly to fastidiousness. The resolutions, however, although embodying the substance of the miner's complaint, were rather imperfectly drawn up, and presented a very unfavorable contrast to the speeches, which were, on the whole, excellent. We do not agree exactly with some of the ideas or reasoning expressed in the resolutions, but, on the great question of relieving the miner of burdens too burdensome for any population to bear, we heartily concur with all that is said, and it would be well for the reputation of Governor Seymour as a statesman, and well for the neighboring colony generally, were this feature in the meeting of yesterday taken more carefully into consideration by those who at present make the laws for British Columbia.

When we consider that it is to the gold of British Columbia, and to it alone, that Victoria owes its present importance, and when we also consider that it is this talisman which has called the various towns of the Fraser, and along the mining route generally, into being, we have said enough, we think, to show how much both colonies are interested in removing restrictions rather than placing obstacles in the miner's way. We do not mean, of course, nor does any intelligent miner mean, that British Columbia should abolish her tariff and reduce the revenue to a Vancouver Island standard, but rather that she should throw as many of her direct taxes as possible into customs, and thus by diminishing largely the number of officials reduce the demands upon the general revenue. At present it would seem the policy of the neighboring colony is to increase the taxation of men in proportion as they penetrate the interior and undergo the hardships of a pioneer life. If they pitch their tent at New Westminster, and make not the first effort to develop the country's resources, they pay but the import duties, which do not really amount to half the aggregate taxation of the colony. If they ascend the Fraser, however, they become to the government what the "Christian" "barbarians" are to the Chinese in the Celestial Empire—objects of suspicion, and in every forward movement they are met by fresh restrictions. No Japanese Tycoon, or Son of the Moon, could take more effectual steps to preserve the interior of his country from the pollution of the enterprising intruder. As a sample of this species of Oriental wisdom, we have six hundred men on "the Meadows," on Williams Creek, paying to the government \$25,000 a half year, solely for the privilege of mining, and over \$40,000 in taxes on articles of consumption, making in all \$65,000 for the mining season. In New Westminster these men would, during the same period, pay but twelve thousand dollars; yet it is to the six or seven hundred people of the latter place, who do literally nothing for the advancement of the country, to whom Governor Seymour is expected to pander, and to whom the interests of the entire country are to be made subservient. This is not all, however—the six hundred miners of the Meadows—and here we speak of the people on but a mile and a half out of the six miles of this swampy tract of country—exceeded during the years of 1863 and 1864, no less a sum than \$600,000, and so far, without

any profitable result. Now we would ask Governor Seymour in all soberness, and the unthinking Sons of the Legislative Council, if increasing the burdens of these men, is either just or politic? Let us suppose for a moment these miners, and those of the other wrecks who are struggling hard against similar great natural difficulties, being obliged to leave the country on account of the onerous nature of the taxation—a misfortune likely enough to happen—where is His Excellency to find a revenue? Where are the two hundred Indians more or less to let them their salaries? and lastly, where are the ambitious citizens of New Westminster to find customers? It must surely be plain to all concerned, that the colony would, in Major Downie's parlance, suddenly relapse into something like its pristine grandeur, when the Siwash were the sole lords and masters of the soil.

We have heard of several mining joint-stock companies which were in the way of formation; brought to a stand-still through the recent action of the British Columbian Government. These companies got frightened, not because there was anything very startling about the increase in the tariff, but because they see by it and the export duty on gold a disposition on the part of the Government to increase rather than diminish the burdens of the miner. At present a company is formed to put a bed-rock flume on Keedley's Creek. This operation will cost during the first two years the sum of \$200,000—a large enough outlay truly for any mining company to bear; but this is not the only financial demand: the Government steps in and claims in taxation the sum of \$63,000. Here is a great undertaking, which will in the course of two years afford employment to upwards of two thousand miners, jeopardized by the ill-considered taxation of the country. The Bed Rock Flume Company on Williams Creek is another illustration. This company before it can obtain any returns will have expended \$180,000 and will have paid to the Government in taxation upwards of \$50,000 more—because probably it is, like the others, opening up the resources of the mining region and making the surrounding ground workable for thousands of free miners. The legislation of the neighboring colony is indeed a stumbling-block to mining enterprise, and will, unless speedily amended, reduce the population to a number too insignificant to necessitate even the employment of a Treasurer. If Governor Seymour wishes to make his mark, he will go to work manfully and get rid of at least one-half the officials that at present hang like a millstone round the neck of the country. Simultaneously he might abolish the tonnage dues and all the public road tolls. An increase to the tariff, if then found necessary, will be no cause of dissatisfaction; for the miner will know that he is placed on something like an equal footing with other and less productive portions of the population, and that Lillock and Douglas, Yale, and New Westminster, will then pay their proper share of the revenue of the country.

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